

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE OF TWO MEMBERS TO INFORM THE PRESIDENT THAT THE TWO HOUSES HAVE COMPLETED THEIR BUSINESS OF THE SESSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 4 of House Resolution 594, House Resolution 608 is adopted.

The text of House Resolution 608 is as follows:

H. RES. 608

*Resolved*, That a committee of two Members of the House be appointed to wait upon the President of the United States and inform him that the House of Representatives has completed its business of the session and is ready to adjourn, unless the President has some other communication to make to them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 4 of House Resolution 594, the Chair appoints the following Members of the House to the committee to notify the President:

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. ARMEY.

The gentleman from Missouri, Mr. GEPHARDT.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4328, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 605 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 605

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 4328) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) is recognized for one hour.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield one-half my time to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), my great friend, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of the resolution, all time yielded is for purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, passage of this rule will enable us to complete the outstanding work for the 105th Congress and adjourn for the remainder of the year. This rule is traditional for conference reports. It waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. Further, it provides for the conference report to be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, the conference report to accompany H.R. 4328, the Transpor-

tation and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 1999, is serving as the vehicle for an omnibus appropriations package for fiscal year 1999. That is the bill that we have before us.

Mr. Speaker, the conference report before the House contains the following general appropriation bills for fiscal year 1999: Transportation; Agriculture; Labor-HHS and Education; Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary; Foreign Operations; District of Columbia; Treasury-Postal Service; and the Interior appropriations bills.

Mr. Speaker, all of the spending bills in this general appropriation bill are within the discretionary spending caps and are fully paid for. This conference report also contains a number of provisions making supplemental appropriations.

A significant portion of the package, and I think it is important for Members to note, is an \$8.4 billion Department of Defense component including funds for missile defense and additional funds for military readiness, so badly needed. This funding is critical to protect the lives of our soldiers and our military personnel who serve overseas in uniform.

I have warned my colleagues many times that we are returning to the very hollow force of the 1970's in our national defense posture. There was a time, that I often recall, when we had hostages being held in a place called Iran. And when we attempted to rescue those hostages being held, we had to cannibalize 14 helicopter gunships just to get 8 that would work, and 3 of those failed, and so did the rescue operation. That was the condition of our military back in the late seventies.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation's Armed Forces are facing the same kind of critical shortages in a number of areas right now.

In terms of personnel, we have lost military personnel. We have commissioned officers and noncommissioned officers who are choosing not to stay in the military. Many of them are being furloughed because of lack of funds. There are shortages of equipment and spare parts, and even ammunition.

Mr. Speaker, all of these indicators of a declining readiness rate are not academic statistics. All of these things contribute to the ability of our Armed Forces to respond rapidly and effectively to a threat from overseas in the manner in which we responded to Saddam Hussein in 1990 and 1991, and today we cannot do that. We do not have the military capability to mount that kind of an operation now. Also these items which are in short supply lead to a greater propensity for training accidents or aircraft crashes, and you see it almost every week now in some part of the world.

Mr. Speaker, the lives of our young men and women who serve in the military are constantly at risk from foreign threats. We should not compound that risk by leaving them in the field with aging or broken or outdated equipment.

Mr. Speaker, the world is a dangerous place, and there are nations and forces who are hostile to the United States and American interests all over this globe. The House should lend its support to our men and women in uniform around the globe who put their lives on the line for the national interests of this country by voting for this package today. I intend to vote for it myself, even though I am a fiscal conservative and do not share all of the purposes of everything in this massive bill.

Mr. Speaker, the United States lives under the constant threat of attack from ballistic missiles launched from China or North Korea or other renegade regimes around this world. It is inconceivable to me that we have not developed a system that would stop incoming ballistic missiles from landing on American cities. Several regimes have a startling missile capability and, when coupled with biological and chemical warheads, these regimes and their devices pose an incredible threat not only to American servicemen serving overseas, but also a direct threat right here to the United States of America.

We all know that the People's Republic of China, which is a hostile nation to this country by their own words, have no less than 13 intercontinental ballistic missiles aimed at American cities right today, yet we are not equipped to do anything about that.

Mr. Speaker, if investing \$1 billion for missile defense in this package is not an emergency, I do not know what an emergency is. This funding is absolutely critical.

Mr. Speaker, the conference agreement also contains funds to combat terrorism, including at our American embassies overseas. For those who have traveled there, you know that many of our embassy personnel are in grave danger right today, and we saw that happen just in the last several months. The Congress must support efforts to counter international terror and the cowards who would employ such methods around the world.

Mr. Speaker, this spending agreement also includes important funding for intelligence activities which are critical so that we can know in advance when terrorists are planning to attack America's infrastructure, such as the World Trade Center, bridges, tunnels or American embassies overseas.

Mr. Speaker, this package also contains funding to address the Year 2000 computer problem, or Y2K, a significant portion of which is defense-related. We must ensure that our defense computers are technically capable to meet the challenges of the new century.

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Mr. Speaker, this omnibus appropriation package contains something even more important than all the things I have just mentioned, and that is crucial funds for the anti-drug efforts as